

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Kingsbury Colony / DNRC- Reciprocal Easement for Administrative Access.
Proposed Implementation Date:	Winter 2018
Proponent:	Kingsbury Colony/Northside Farms Inc., 600 Kingsbury Colony Road, Valier, MT 59486 DNRC, PO Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620
Location:	SW4SE4, SE4SW4, Section 6, T29N, R7W – 80 Acres Lot 1, NE4NW4, NW4NE4, S2NE4, N2SE4, Section 7, T29N, R7W-282.54 Acres Lots 1, 2, Section 18, T29N, R7W-85.45 Acres E2E2, Section 12, T29N, R8W-160.00 Acres E2NE4, Section 13, T29N, R8W-80.00 Acres
County:	Pondera
Trust:	Common Schools (CS)

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The DNRC and Kingsbury Colony are proposing a reciprocal easement agreement for administrative access. Through the reciprocal easement agreement, Kingsbury Colony/Northside Farms Inc. will receive administrative access to approximately 1,950 acres of deeded land and DNRC will receive administrative access to approximately 688 acres of state land. The proposed agreement utilizes an existing road system that cross approximately 10,615.00' (7.31) acres of state land and 13,160.00' (9.06 acres) of deeded land. The proposed reciprocal administrative access easement will be 30.00' wide on the existing road.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

DNRC-Surface Owner and Proponent
Northside Farms Inc.-Surface Lessee and Proponent, Lease #9730
Kingsbury Colony-Deeded Land Owner and Proponent

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this project.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Deny the reciprocal easement for administrative access.

Alternative B (the Proposed action) –Approve the reciprocal easement for administrative access.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES* potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.
- Explain **POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS** following each resource heading.
- Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Soils and geology in this area are generally suitable for road use. The proponents will use an existing road and no road improvements will occur. The existing road surface is covered with existing surface gravel. No grading or graveling of the existing road will occur.

No cumulative effects to the soils are anticipated.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

No important surface or groundwater resources will be impacted by the proposed easements as the road is existing and no road improvements will occur.

Other water quality and/or quantity issues will not be impacted by the proposed action.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

The proposed easement will consist of no disturbance to soils, so no cumulative effects to air quality are anticipated.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

The vegetation within the proposed project area consists primarily of native rangeland grasses, forbs, and shrubs. An existing road will be used, and no road construction will take place, so no impact to the existing vegetation will occur.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T29N, R7W: There were no plant species of concern noted or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T29N, R8W: There were no plant species of concern noted or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The proposal does not include any land use change which would yield changes to the wildlife habitat. The proposed action will not impact wildlife forage, cover, or traveling corridors. Nor will this action change the juxtaposition of wildlife forage, water, or hiding and thermal cover. The proposed action will not have long-term negative effects on existing wildlife species and/or wildlife habitat.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The parcels are in the NCD grizzly bear recovery zone. Grizzly bears will not be impacted by the proposed action as an existing road will be used and no road construction will take place. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by proposal.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T29N, R7W. There were two animal species of concern, zero potential species of concern, and zero special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Mammals-Hoary Bat. Birds-Brewer's Sparrow. These tracts of grazing land do not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the proposed action as an existing road will be used and no road construction will take place.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T29N, R8W. There was one animal species of concern, zero potential species of concern, and zero special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Birds-Golden Eagle. These tracts of grazing land do not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the proposed action as an existing road will be used and no road construction will take place.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

No historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources will be present do to the disturbance caused by the construction of the existing road. No road improvements will take place to the existing road, so no cultural resources will be impacted by this proposal.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The state land does not provide any unique scenic qualities not also provided on adjacent private lands. The proposed action will use an existing road and no road construction will take place, so there would be no change to the aesthetics in either alternative.

No direct or cumulative effects to aesthetics are anticipated.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

The demand on environmental resources such as land, water, air, or energy will not be affected by the proposed action. The proposed action will not consume resources that are limited in the area. There are no other projects in the area that will affect the proposed action.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

There are no other projects or plans being considered on the tracts listed on this EA.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES* potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.
- Explain **POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS** following each resource heading.
- Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

The proposed easements will not impact human health or safety in the area.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

The proponents will use an existing road and no road improvements will occur. The reciprocal access agreement will benefit in the future agricultural management of both DNRC and private lands

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The proposed action will not create any jobs as the road is existing and no road improvements will take place.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed project.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on government services.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

The proposed action is following State and County laws. No other management plans are in effect for the area.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

This tract of state land generally has a high recreational value for hunting. State land is currently not legally accessible. The proposed action is not expected to impact general recreational activities on this state tract because the access agreement will not include general public access for recreation.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing

The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments.

No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposal.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The proposed action will not impact the cultural uniqueness or diversity of the area.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

The reciprocal easement will net a \$2,836.00 payment to the school trust. The access agreement will also improve long term management of land owned by the Colony and DNRC.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Tony Nickol	Date: November 21, 2018
	Title: Land Use Specialist, Conrad Unit, Central Land Office	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed action) –Approve the reciprocal easement for administrative access.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

No significant impacts are anticipated.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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EIS

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More Detailed EA

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No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Erik Eneboe
	Title: Conrad Unit Manager, CLO
Signature:  Date: December 3, 2018	

Kingsbury Colony Road Map

